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THE NAVY'S GREATEST NEED.

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FOR some reason the navy's most pressing need at this moment is scarcely known to the people. It may be worth while to inquire how this may be the case. To make a clear presentation, certain premises will have to be assumed as a starting point. The first one is, that the people are interested in the navy, believing that it is essential to our national welfare, and that, while they do not advocate that it shall be stronger than that of any other nation, still they are of the opinion that it should be of adequate strength, up to date in its construction, and efficient. Another premise is that they believe that all necessary steps have been, or are being, taken to bring about in course of time a result that shall be satisfactory from the view-point of the earlier premise.

Now, these two premises may not be universally accepted. There are, of course, people who will deny either, or both. But it is necessary to have some groundwork to build on, and it is the belief of the writer that the premises express with sufficient accuracy the ideas of the mass of the people. The first is in reality almost self-evident, and needs scarcely more than a statement to ensure its acceptance. The interest in the navy has always been apparent, but especially so since the Spanish war, in which its preparedness and success seemed to commend it to the people. As to its being essential to the national welfare, there can be no doubt. Very few people desire war, but they want to be ready for it, if it has to come; and the mere fact of being ready for it will often prevent it. Moreover, the navy will have to bear the brunt of the next war. The army would come in for first place only in the event of operations against Canada or Mexico, both remote possibilities; whereas in any other conflict the navy would

necessarily be the main reliance. Of course, the term "adequate strength" is a little elastic; but it does not imply, for instance, that this country may some day have to struggle against any Power or combination of Powers for its very existence as a nation, which is the theory underlying the naval strength of Great Britain, a nation dependent even for its food supplies on other countries. Adequate strength with us would mean a power sufficient to uphold our treaty rights and maintain the Monroe Doctrine if necessary. This doctrine, by the way, gives us no definite rights; it is nothing more than a declaration of our intentions; and the weight it carries abroad is in exact proportion to our apparent ability to uphold it. As to the material of the navy, naturally the people will not be satisfied with anything short of the best in ships, guns, machinery, and armor. It has been a maxim with us since our earliest naval history to produce ships which, class for class, shall be just a little more powerful than those of a possible enemy. And the efficiency of these ships, once built, will depend on the skill, courage, discipline, and training of the crews, qualities in which American crews have never been deficient.

The evidences to justify the second premise are manifold. In nineteen years a modern steel navy has been erected out of actually nothing. Prior to 1883, ships, guns, and armor of the present type could not be built or manufactured in this country. Now the navy comprises nearly every possible type of construction; and, owing to a widespread interest and a strong national feeling, nearly every session of Congress sees the addition of several vessels of types suitable to round out the total aggregate of naval strength. The vessels as authorized are in course of time launched, with a fair sponsor, and are eventually commissioned; they are presented with a piece of bronze, or a library, or a silver service, by the cities or States after which they are named, and they then take their place in the fleet and begin a conscientious training of their crews, winter and summer, to the end that every quality of structure, armament, and machinery shall be capable of its highest efficiency. The press keeps the people informed of the movements of the fleet and prints full accounts of target practice and manoeuvres, with the general result that almost everybody knows something about the navy, where the ships are, and how we rank with reference to other Powers.

Hence, up to this point, everything seems as satisfactory as

possible. There is, however, something that has not been considered at all; and it is as important as, or more important than, all that has been mentioned. This is a curious state of affairs, and yet, too, it is capable of explanation, in a way. There is something in the word "navy" that is partly responsible for it. The first idea, and often the only idea, suggested by that word is of an aggregation of ships, usually under way, with smoke issuing, with guns and turrets prominent, and small vessels and torpedo-boats cruising in and out among the battle-ships. Now to establish a comparison, consider the word "army." At once there comes into the mind a picture of men and horses, with accompaniments of waving plumes and bright trappings, rifles, bayonets and artillery. Perhaps a battle presents itself, with all this mass in action. In either event, the prominent idea is that of living beings. In regard to the navy, as we saw, the idea is that of ships. The ships, however, without living beings to direct and control them, would be of no more use than stacked rifles and parked artillery. The navy, then, needs men, as well as ships, a fact which most people probably scarcely ever think of, or if they do think of it, they suppose the officers and men are provided in some way as need is found for their services. But this is not the case; there can be no crews for the new ships unless something is done to provide them; and here is the most crying need of the navy at the present moment, one in comparison with which the question whether we authorize three or six ships, or none at all, at any session of Congress is now actually insignificant, a question too of the very greatest concern to everybody, and one less likely to be fully considered from the very fact that the need is so little known.

These statements perhaps seem exaggerated. They are not so in reality. They are no stronger than the facts of the case warrant. They are borne out by the simplest kind of figuring. To state the case briefly, before giving the details, the number of officers and men in the navy is limited by law. While the tonnage of the navy has doubled and trebled, the number of sea-going officers has not been increased at all, and that of the enlisted men only to a limited extent. Each session of Congress, as a rule, sees an increase in the tonnage: the increases in the men have come at rare intervals and on strong presentation by the Navy Department; whereas there has been no increase of officers.

Nominally, the personnel act of 1899 made a slight increase, but the vacancies thus created, owing to a lack of graduates, have never been filled. To give an illustration from commercial life, suppose that a line of ocean steamers has ten vessels in its service, all suitably manned, and that it gradually increases its fleet to thirty vessels; but that, from some cause not entirely clear, as each new steamer is added, its officers and men are drawn from the older ships without any increase of the total number. How far could this method be pursued, and would the passengers be satisfied with the results? Naturally, there must be some sort of logical relation between tonnage and men, in the navy as in the merchant service. An effort will be made to find this relation, and to suggest a ready means of putting it in effect.

The case of the enlisted men will be considered first. To do this, it is not necessary to resort to a mass of figures. The significant fact is that with the present enlisted force the ships already finished cannot all be commissioned. When a new ship is ready for her crew, one or more of the older ships must be laid up. The report of the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation for last year (1901) contains a very temperate and convincing statement of the needs of the navy at that time. It showed that, at a low estimate, an increase of 3,000 men was needed for that year. These men were provided for at the session of Congress just ended. They bring up the total of authorized enlisted men and boys to 28,000. Now, this estimate is very low. It was only thought to be temporarily adequate because it was expected that a number of ships would be out of commission or laid up for repairs. But in order to be perfectly conservative and to avoid any possible exaggeration, this number will be assumed as expressing the proper relation of men to tons of shipping then completed. An examination of the Navy Register for January 1, 1902, shows that the total completed tonnage of the navy was at that time 481,967 tons. Now, bearing in mind that the allowance of men was assumed for the vessels then in serviceable condition, it will be seen that by taking the total tonnage, none excepted, the ratio to be arrived at will be at the lowest admissible figure. The above figures, that is 28,000 men and 481,967 tons, give a ratio in round numbers of 60 men per 1,000 tons of shipping. This then will be taken as the logical ratio of men to tons. If the legal authorized strength falls below this ratio, then a great risk is

being assumed, and also the people of the country are being unfairly treated. As has been stated, they believe that all needed steps are being taken to make the navy efficient; and should they find it deficient in men, they will have a right to feel that their interests have not been properly cared for.

In the above argument it has been assumed that, having the ships, and authority to enlist the men, all that will be needed will be simply to enlist them. This is only partially true. Plenty of men may be enlisted, but not always of the sort needed. The available sea-faring population of the country is in no way equal to supplying the demand for naval recruits. It was so equal at one time, but with the decline of shipping and the added circumstance that a merchant sailor is almost as ignorant aboard a battle-ship as a landsman, it is easily seen that some other source of supply must be drawn on to fill out the quotas. There are two such sources, the youth of the country, who may enter the navy as apprentices and undergo training during minority, and the young men of the country, especially those from the interior, in unlimited numbers. The latter are forming an extremely satisfactory element in the new navy, but it takes time to train them. It is quite evident that they cannot be of much use immediately on entering; but the time it takes to build a ship is always available to enlist and train her crew. All that is needed is the authority of law to enlist them. A point has now been reached where the one thing needful to be done seems apparent. If the authorization to build a new ship should carry with it the authorization to enlist and train a crew for her, the problem would be solved for all time. In practice this would resolve itself into ascertaining the completed and authorized tonnage at the beginning of each fiscal year and then enlisting the additional men needed, not to exceed 60 men for every 1,000 tons of shipping. The total tons for any one year would be the total for the previous year increased by the new tonnage authorized and diminished by the tonnage stricken from the list.

The completed and authorized tonnage by the last Navy Register, January, 1902, was in round numbers 750,000 tons. This will require, when all the vessels shall have been finished, an enlisted force of 45,000 men and boys. In the meantime, to ensure that efficient crews shall be ready to man the completed ships, what is needed now is that the Secretary of the Navy shall have

power to enlist men and train them as needed, not to exceed the ratio as above determined.

In the above estimates no account is taken of the large fleet of auxiliaries that will have to be impressed into service in time of war. The present small bodies of State naval militia will help to some extent in manning the inner line of defence. In addition, there should be a strong national reserve for use in time of war either on the inner line, aboard the auxiliaries, or to fill the war complements of ships of the navy.

The problem of officers is far more serious for a variety of reasons—among them that, while the enlisted force has been increased by small numbers from time to time, the sea-going officers have not been increased at all since the days of wooden steamers, and that, while a good man-of-war's man can be made in a cruise, it takes a dozen years beginning at boyhood to make an efficient lieutenant. In the report of the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, already referred to, it is shown that 1,026 additional line officers will be needed by the time all the ships then authorized shall be finished, and the estimate is stated to be at least 30 per cent. smaller than the practice abroad for ships in commission. As the navy then consisted of 1,042 line officers, counting the cadets doing sea duty, it meant that the number of officers would have had to be *doubled* in about three years from that time, or in two years from now. The 1,042 officers then on the list had been in training anywhere from four to forty-eight years. In the next two years an equal number must be added to the list to bring up the total strength to a minimum of efficiency! The problem is an impossible one. It means that there has been great shortsightedness in the past, but with that we are not now concerned. For the future, while 1,026 trained officers cannot be provided in two years, still something may be done, and it should be done at once; for every year of delay means the chance of national humiliation, which may however possibly be avoided by acting now. From the figures quoted, that is 2,068 officers and 750,000 tons of shipping,—and as in the case of the enlisted men, they are an exceedingly moderate estimate, made by considering the individual ships and the practice of foreign nations,—the proper ratio of line officers to tons of shipping is seen to be about 3 officers per 1,000 tons. This does not mean that all the officers are required for sea duty. There are some technical duties in con-

nection with administration and the preparation of ships that will always require some officers to be ashore. Also, a small reserve will be needed to allow for sickness, leave, and the interchange of duties. The total figure quoted above, that is 2,068 officers, was made up of 1,479 officers, or 71 per cent., at sea; 425, or 21 per cent., on shore duty; and 164, or 8 per cent., as a reserve. The total, as has been seen, amounts to 3 officers per 1,000 tons, which ratio should be authorized by law, as has been recommended in the case of the enlisted men, 1 officer for every 20 men, 3 officers and 60 men for every 1,000 tons of completed and authorized shipping, the tonnage to be ascertained at the beginning of each fiscal year, and the quotas of officers and men to hold for that year. The above refers only to line officers, though the same reasoning applies equally to the staff corps.

As has been stated, it will be impossible to provide for these extra officers at once. There are two methods of procedure—one is to appoint a large number of officers directly from civil life, the other is to increase temporarily the Naval Academy appointments to the limit of the resources of that institution. The first method would give the quickest results, the second the best in the long run. The people do not need to be told of the fatal impolicy of appointing officers in the navy who are lacking in a previous thorough naval training. Some there are who would prove capable, but their number is so small as not seriously to affect the issue. If men are appointed without this previous naval training, untold harm may result; for though there is no mystery in the naval profession, it does require a certain amount of technical knowledge, and that of a kind difficult to acquire when the start is not made early in life. It is also possible to commission men who have risen from the ranks, as is done now in a few cases; but owing to the necessarily technical character of the examination, few applicants are successful, not enough to affect the question of supply.

Hence the most available and the only desirable remedy seems to be to increase the appointments to the Naval Academy. The strength of the cadet corps, prior to the session of Congress just ended, was one from each Congressional District, one from each Territory, one from the District of Columbia, and ten at large appointed by the President—total 371. Supposing that all these graduate, which they do not, and assuming the course to be four

years, this would mean about 93 graduates annually. Actually, this number must be reduced at least a fourth (a half is nearer the experience of the last ten years) to allow for failures during the course. The resulting number has not been enough heretofore to supply the annual waste in the present navy list, as witness 145 vacancies at the foot of the list on January 1st, 1902. With the new apportionment of Congressmen, taking effect next year, there will be twenty-nine more appointments, and the recent naval act, besides changing the title of cadets to midshipmen, gives the President an increase of five appointments, and each Senator one appointment, making a total of 495. But, as has been stated, the list of officers should be doubled in the next two years. Hence the appointments should have been doubled, merely to prevent falling behind. To get ahead they should be more than doubled.

Under the present law, an appointment is made every four years from each Congressional District, except the midshipman fail during the course, when his place is filled. Doubling the appointments would mean one every two years; or, in other words, as Congressmen are elected for two years, each Congressman would then have an appointment, instead of every other one, as now. Then the Presidential appointments could well be made ten annually, instead of fifteen every four years as now; and each Senator, under this rule, would appoint a midshipman to the Academy every two years, instead of every four years, as now. This arrangement would, as stated, probably keep the navy supplied after it shall have reached the strength deemed essential to officer the ships already authorized. But to reach that number as early as possible, and to provide for new ships as they shall be authorized, appointments should be made to Annapolis to the full capacity of the Academy. By considering one from each district every two years to be the normal rate, the Secretary of the Navy could be granted authority to designate the various districts in rotation for extra appointments until the standard ratio should be attained, that is 3 officers for every 1,000 tons of authorized shipping. When this ratio is reached the authority should lapse, and the normal ratio should again hold until a further increase should be needed.

It may be asked how this great expansion may be made without upsetting the existing grades of officers and the duties they are required to perform. The answer is that the addition will neces-

sarily be spread over a number of years. In an emergency, a graduate of the Naval Academy may be given deck duty at once. In the same way, the present older officers may be given any duty up to and including the highest. Between these two extremes a natural adjustment will readily shape itself. But as the total number of officers on the list will be variable each year, within the limit of 3 officers per 1,000 tons of shipping, the number in each grade cannot be fixed as now, but should be rather a percentage of the whole. Fortunately a basis for arriving at the desirable percentage in each grade exists in the carefully thought out report already referred to. For the then needs of the navy it was shown that there should be a grade of vice-admiral, and that the lieutenants and ensigns should be increased by 300 altogether, leaving the other grades as at present. The complete list would then stand as follows:

Admiral	1
Vice-Admiral	4 (an increase of 4)
Rear-Admiral	14 (a decrease of 4)
Captain	70
Commander	112
Lieutenant-Commander	170
Lieutenant	350 (an increase of 50)
Lieutenant, Junior Grade, and Ensign.....	600 (an increase of 250)

Total.....1,321 (an increase of 300)

The above list is in accord with the present law except in the variations as noted. The total number in the higher grades is not changed at all, the increase coming in the lieutenants and junior officers, where it is most needed. All that is necessary now is to work out the percentages corresponding to the above numbers. The admiral may be exempted from the percentage rule, simply stipulating that there shall be one admiral and that the other grades shall be a percentage of the whole. The result is as follows:

Admiral (1)	
Vice-Admiral	0.3 per cent.
Rear-Admiral	1.1 per cent.
Captain	5.3 per cent.
Commander	8.5 per cent.
Lieutenant-Commander	12.9 per cent.
Lieutenant	26.5 per cent.
Lieutenant, Junior Grade, and Ensign.....	45.4 per cent.

Total.....100.0

The steps in order, then, are, to make appointments to the Naval Academy every two years, instead of every four years as

now; and if the capacity of the Academy will permit, to authorize the Secretary of the Navy temporarily to increase the rate until there shall be 3 officers in the navy for every 1,000 tons of completed and authorized shipping; then, of the officers on the list at the beginning of each fiscal year, to specify that one shall be an admiral, and that the numbers in the other grades shall be percentages of the whole in accordance with the list as given. In this way all the grades will be slowly increased, but increased in precisely the proportion required for the proper performance of duty; and eventually, perhaps in a dozen or more years, there should be enough officers to fit out all the ships at the rate of 3 per 1,000 tons.

The problem is thus exceedingly serious. With everything that can be done to build up from the bottom, provided the most energetic means are at once adopted, the grades cannot be properly filled for a number of years. The present session of Congress authorized about 60,000 tons of shipping. This will require 180 additional line officers. Add 40 for waste during the year, and we have 220 in all. There should have been 220 graduates to supply this demand; there were actually 60!

To illustrate the case still further, it is possible to compute the appointments that should be made annually to bring the navy up to proper strength in ten years, counting from 1903, which is the earliest date at which new appointments can now be made. There are at present, completed and authorized, about 800,000 tons of shipping. The average annual increase since the Spanish war (in one year there was no increase authorized) has been 54,000 tons. This is by no means an excessive rate; but, to be conservative and to allow for possible diminutions, assume that 40,000 tons (two-thirds the current appropriation) will represent the annual increase up to 1913, making a total at that time of 1,240,000 tons. At the ratio as above given this would require 3,720 officers. There are now about 1,060 officers on the list, counting the midshipmen who have passed the four-years course and are at sea. Thus, there must be an increase of 2,660 officers all told. The annual waste is now by law about 4 per cent. Suppose all voluntary retirements stopped and the waste cut down to 3 per cent. The average list from now till 1913 would be 2,390, 3 per cent. of which is 72 annually, or about 790 in eleven years, which added to 2,660 makes 3,450, the number of graduates required

for the eleven years. There will be this coming year at the Academy 466 midshipmen (495 less 29 for the new apportionment not yet in effect). Suppose three-fourths of them graduate, say 350. This taken from the total number required as above, that is 3,450, leaves 3,100 to be appointed and graduated under the new law. As the first appointment cannot be made till 1903, the first graduation will not be until 1907, and there will be seven classes altogether, up to and including 1913. Hence 3,100 must be divided by 7, which gives 443 as the number of annual graduates. Assuming still that three-fourths of those appointed graduate, there must be 591 appointments annually, beginning right away, or as soon as Congress can act, in order to have the navy officered to the lowest estimate of efficiency by 1913. This would mean a midshipman battalion of about 2,000, instead of the present 500, roundly; or for the next ten years an appointment by each Senator and Representative, not every four years as now, but every year or oftener.

To say that this is a serious state of affairs does not reach the outskirts of the situation. It is nothing less than astounding; and it is worse, because the people are absolutely ignorant that such a condition exists. Are we to fall down helpless, or are we to accept the situation and stir ourselves to meet it? It can be met; there are no buildings or appliances now available at Annapolis to accommodate such large numbers, but several ships that are now laid up can be ordered there in reserve and made to answer until other means shall be provided. Surely, now that the truth about this matter has been made clear, the American people will not sit idle and see an institution in which they take a just pride exposed to the risk of a humiliation that will be national if it should come, all because they did not know that the navy was not receiving every proper attention.

Now, all of the above is based on printed official reports, but official reports have no circulation. It may be stated in conclusion that in foreign countries, notably in England, "Navy Leagues" of patriotic citizens exist to keep the people informed of the truth about the navy. No such organization exists in this country.

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